

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Steve Capps
(916) 651-8750

Ranger in Stable Condition

State Parks Ranger Shot At Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park

SANTA CRUZ – A veteran Ranger with the California Department of Parks and Recreation was shot and wounded today while citing an illegal camper at Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park, the first shooting of a California State Park Ranger on record.

The Ranger was in stable condition after undergoing surgery for a leg wound at a Santa Cruz hospital. The injury was not considered life threatening.

The suspect in the shooting was still at large as of this afternoon. He was described as a white male in his early 30s, with dark hair and a black moustache, wearing a plaid long-sleeved shirt, blue jeans and a dark bill cap. He was last seen driving a stolen 1984 white Mercedes sedan.

The injured officer, Supervising Ranger Sharon Galligan, is a 16-year veteran with State Parks. Like other Rangers in State Parks, she is a trained peace officer and was carrying a sidearm at the time of the attack. State Parks officials said she returned fire.

“Our prayers for a speedy recovery are with Supervising Ranger Galligan and her family,” said Ruth Coleman, Acting Director of California State Parks. “This is a startling reminder of the dangers faced by our Rangers on a daily basis in patrolling the largest state park system in America.”

State Parks officials said the shooting occurred shortly before 8 a.m. at Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park, five miles north of Santa Cruz. The campground is closed for the winter. Ranger Galligan went to the park after receiving a report of a man camping illegally. She was in the process of citing the man when he shot her. The man fled the scene in a pickup truck that authorities said later was discovered to have been stolen out of Redding.

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The suspect abandoned the pickup truck a short time later, and stole another vehicle at gunpoint from a nearby home. Authorities said he forced the two women to accompany him in their Mercedes. He later let the two women off in San Jose. The women reportedly were not harmed.

A number of law enforcement agencies are involved in the investigation and pursuit of the suspect, including California State Parks, the California Highway Patrol, the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Department and the San Jose Police Department.

State Park Rangers undergo the same certified peace officer training as other law enforcement officers in California. They perform law enforcement duties at State Parks and provide law enforcement support to other agencies during emergencies.

While California State Park Rangers have been involved in a number of shooting incidents in recent years, including ones in which they were shot at, none had ever been shot until today.

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